

IASC Meeting Summary

October 14-16, 2003

This meeting was hosted by the National Park Service at the Tenaya Lodge in Fish Camp, California. Presentation materials may be found on the IASC website:

<http://www.arb.ca.gov/smp/progdev/iasc/iasc.htm>

Meeting Participants:

Corky Conover (NPS), Dan Buckley (NPS), Tom Nichols (NPS), Diane Stewart (NPS), Mike Lewelling (NPS), Bill Kaage (NPS), Ben Jacobs (NPS), Annie Esperanza (NPS), Jan Rea (USFS), Christie Neill (USFS), Chris Ryan (BLM), Sherri Fairbanks (SCAQMD), Ron Hamilton (FWC), Jeff Stephens (CDF), Mike Beasley (NPS), Doug Tolar (BAAQMD), Mike Basso (BAAQMD), Sam Jackson (NVBAQP), Mallory Ham (Ventura County APCD), Dennis King (ARB), Bill Sandman (TCAPCD), Melissa Nicholas (TCAPCD), Dave McCandliss (USFS), Bob Reynolds (LCAQMD), Jon Becknell (Great Basin APCD), Duane Ono (Great Basin APCD), Cheryl Haden (ARB), Susan Engstrom (SMAQMD), Jose Martinez (SJVAPCD), Evan Shipp (SJVAPCD), Sharon Wedro (SJVAPCD), John Kennedy (EPA R9), Bruce Oulrey (ARB), Trent Procter (USFS), Suraj Ahuja (USFS), Katy Warner (NPS), Judy Forbes (SNF), Tod Johnson (NPS), Jennifer Quashnick (TRPA).

October 14

Round Table Agency Updates

NPS: Busy year, North Cascades had 3000 acres of Wildland Fire Use. Areas that don't get a lot of fire got more than usual. 75% of fuel dollars are going to WUI, 50% of that is being contracted out, about \$600,000 in 2003.

USFS: 100,000 acres treated this year. In 2004, 75% of all work will be in WUI. A lot of resources went out of region to support suppression. Southern California beetle kill is producing massive amounts (1000 ton/day) of wood waste. More Rx burning may be considered for future due to cheaper cost. An Air Curtain demonstration /presentation/field trip may be possible for the spring meeting. Existing CoGens are overwhelmed by previous fires – no new facilities planned at the moment.

BLM: relatively small season in So Cal (so far!)

Interagency Fire Weather Center: National Weather Service is taking over the forecast in California. A project/grant has been initiated to obtain high resolution model data using RAWS.

CDF: The California Budget is their biggest concern at the moment. There will be no reduction in emergency services, so cuts will probably happen in resource management.

Bay Area AQMD: 1000-2000 acres in Bay Area burned in various projects.

Washoe County: Lot of smoke impacts from WFU's in California

Tuolumne County APCD: Conference calls are great; good feedback on Rx burns.

Lake County AQMD: Most burns were small, less than one day duration.

Great Basin APCD: Not a lot of local fires, but a lot of smoke impact from western Sierra WFU's. There is concern about the amount of ozone released from these fires.

Sacramento AQMD: Rice straw burning is a long term issue. Some Rx burns were done.

San Joaquin Valley APCD: Good success in Rx program. Ag burning will be eliminated by 2010. Field burning will be abolished in 2006. WFU's had some impacts.

EPA: Title 17 more than meets federal standards. Most states have sent in their boundaries for the 8 hour ozone standard. Air Now monitoring data could be a resource for air quality forecasts. Health based brochure "How Smoke Affects Your Health" coordinated with NIFC.

ARB: Those air districts that haven't submitted smoke management programs for ARB approval should do so. Air Districts should talk with each other more frequently. The impact of burning on ozone formation needs further assessment.

Updates of Yosemite NP and Sequoia and Kings Canyon NP's Fire Mgmt Plans

YNP: Draft FMP EIS/EA received about 200 comments, mostly regarding mechanical treatments. There are 6 WUI communities in the Park. The FMP should go to the printer in November.

SEKI: The theme of the 1999 FMP is to protect, restore, reduce. A multi-strategy approach is the desired alternative. The FONSI is at the Regional level awaiting final approval for the new FMP.

PW-3/Gin Flat (Yosemite NP) Panel

There was much discussion, interest, and many suggestions from the entire group regarding "suppression" terminology. Air districts would like clarification of suppression

actions/tactics taken by burners. Mike Beasley reported that heavy fuel loads and nighttime burns led to most of the air quality problems. Public smoke tolerance was determined to be less than a week of duration, and roughly 100 acres of burn per day. Mechanical thinning helps decrease the chances of torching and crown fires, but is not as good as Rx burning for reducing fuel loads. Bill Kaage emphasized that communication between air districts and burners was very important. The public should be informed inside and outside the affected burn area for the duration of the burn. Air districts farther away should also be notified (e.g., Washoe County, NV and Mono and Inyo Counties in eastern Sierra region). Web sources could give more information to the public.

Atwood Rx Burn (Sequoia and Kings Canyon NP)

According to Corky Conover and Ben Jacobs, this burn was very successful. Jose Martinez reported that communication with the air district was good and the Park even flew a SJVAPCD meteorologist over the burn drainage.

Complaint Resolution

Bruce Oulrey asked for discussion regarding the ARB/CAPCOA Protocol developed for the California Environmental Justice Program. There was concern about the transferal of complaints from land managers to the air quality authorities. The conclusion seemed to be that no new document was needed; informal discussions to improve communication would be more helpful.

October 15

PFIRS Update

Bruce Oulrey gave an overview of the website, www.pfirs.net. Enhancements, including a mapping function, will be forthcoming after the system is up and running. A users' manual and training is budgeted and in the works.

Business Meeting

Consensus seemed to be that the meeting frequency should be changed to twice a year, in April/May and Oct/Nov time frames. For 2004, meetings are set for April 14-15 (CDF Host) and October 13-14 (ARB Host). The steering committee will discuss changes to schedule and send out confirmed dates and locations. Suggested agenda topics included: EPA training to help with public education; trading of credits to reduce smoke emissions; ozone modeling demo and other research done by Prof. Goldstein of UC Berkeley and researchers from UCR and UCD; air/smoke interactions and diurnal effects; factors contributing to change in No. California visibility.

Ignition Decision

Smoke Management Plan very important to consider before ignition from air district perspective. Also, prior local existing emission conditions, and spot forecasts for weather. Communication is extremely important between burners and air districts. Public notification may include radio, newspapers, visitor centers, signage, public meetings. Tom Nichols emphasized the many checks and balances in place before NPS burns can take place. There are many opportunities for input from all affected parties. Ben Jacobs wanted to know how consistent is fire weather modeling between meteorologists – depends on model chosen and interpretation. MM5 information will be provided through meteorologists.

Natural Wildfire Ignitions

Fire Use fire activity follows weather activity. In YOSE and SEKI NP's more active fire management may be used earlier on larger fires by mid-September, especially at lower elevations. Prediction of growth rate is still an art. WFU's help keep larger and more devastating fire events from happening, as well as having other direct resource benefits to plant and animal communities (e.g. disease and insect control, enhanced seed germination of desirable species, and improved forage for deer). Bill Kaage contributed that he considers social and ecological effects to be the two basic determiners for whether the fire is wanted/unwanted. More WFU's probably mean less Rx fires over the season. Corky Conover stated that the cost of suppression fires in SEKI in 2003 was about \$3200 per acre, and WFU's were only \$36 per acre. There was much discussion and a request to have a workshop with a facilitator to address procedures, coordination and communication. Bruce Oulrey suggested a smaller discussion group, and warned that political policy will prevail unless procedures are agreed on soon. John Kennedy suggested an annual planning meeting to set triggers and thresholds.

Smoke Monitoring Pilot Testing

Trent Procter gave a PowerPoint presentation on Regional Scale and Project Level Monitoring. The objectives are to test the use of BAM technology at three sites, and understand background PM and contribution of smoke to PM in those selected communities. The pilot is scheduled and paid for on a two year basis. The data should eventually be compatible with CIPS and QA standards. Installation and training is targeted for Feb/March 2004. It was suggested that a third party audit of equipment be set up to maintain QA standards. Duane Ono stated that in his experience BAM may be reliable for 24 hour averages, but not for hourly data.

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